

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002529

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/15/2025

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [IZ](#) [KRG](#) [KDP](#)

SUBJECT: KURDISH IDP ENCLAVE IN NINEWA SLOWLY RECOVERING
FROM SADDAM-ERA ARABIZATION

Classified By: Acting Regional Coordinator Clarence
Hudson. Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

Summary

1. (C) The Kurdish Yezidi settlement of Mahut in northeast Ninewa, 30 years ago a site of forced re-settlement of Kurds, is today a large village center struggling with the same infrastructure issues as most other Ninewa communities, based on a visit to Mahut on June 13. Kurds largely re-occupied nine smaller villages surrounding Mahut just after the fall of the former regime, living in houses constructed by Arabs during their 30-year occupation. Despite Mahut being part of Ninewa, residents fly the flag of Kurdistan and the KDP is building roads with KRG funding. End Summary.

2. (U) Elements of the 448th Civil Affairs Battalion of Task Force Freedom visited the village center of Mahut, located about 23 miles northeast of Mosul in Ninewa Province, accompanied by Regional Embassy Office Mosul Poloff, on June 13. The group also visited a nearby farming village of Mamrashan.

Mahut Village Center Home To Displaced Kurds

3. (U) Village leaders in Mahut said the Yezidi town grew exponentially in 1975 when, after the Algerian Agreement with Iran, Saddam Hussein forcibly removed them from nine nearby villages, giving their houses and property to Arab settlers. Mahut was surrounded by Arabs and served as a makeshift detention center for the Yezidis, whose Kurdish roots but non-Islamic religion often draws persecution from other people groups in northern Iraq. Mahut's 15,000 residents today keep their smaller village identification, reportedly grouping close together in the town's cinderblock sprawl. Mahut shows the same development problems observed in other towns populated by Yezidis. Unemployment is at 75 percent and electricity is limited to a few hours a day, the leaders said. Unhealthy living conditions persist: raw sewage runs in the streets -- causing frequent cases of typhoid.

Kurds Have Returned to Outlying Villages

4. (U) Village leaders said that many residents returned to their former villages in the immediate aftermath of Operation Iraqi Freedom. A stop at the nearby village of Mamrashan confirmed this, with Yezidi leaders pointing out that most construction in the village of mud huts was the work of Arabs -- only one house, the house of the village chief, was of Yezidi construction. Arab occupiers reportedly destroyed the Yezidi temple that once overlooked the village. The village chief said Arabs abandoned the village when the former regime fell. Village leaders said they had returned to growing wheat on their land, though they complained that some Arabs had built large homes on their property. None of the villagers we met had spoken with the government about getting compensation for lost property nor had made claims to the Iraq Property Claims Commission (IPCC). Leaders in Mahut said more people would return to their original villages if housing were available.

KDP Planting the Flag, With KRG Money

5. (C) Houses in Mahut and Mamrashan flew the flags of the KDP and of Kurdistan. Village leaders unanimously gave thumbs-up when asked if they supported the KDP. The KDP chief for Mahut was the principal interlocutor for the villagers. He said that a new road being constructed down Mahut's main drag was being built by the KDP, paid for with funds

from Dahok Province in Kurdistan. The doctor in Mahut's sole medical clinic said he received half of his support from Dahok Province despite being located in Ninewa.

Comment

16. (C) Thirty years after the upheaval caused by Arabization, Mahut has clear developmental problems like most of the Yazidi settlements in northeastern Ninewa. Probably, the return of some villagers to their ancestral homes softened some social pressures. Housing shortages for returnees seemed to be a recurring theme. The area is a bastion of support for the KDP, which seems intent on acting as a de facto government and exerting its influence on the northeastern part of Ninewa.

17. (U) Basrah and Kirkuk, minimize considered.

Jeffrey